Dear Friend,

Happy New Year! I returned to NASW-MA in April as Executive Director after serving as the Director of Government Relations from 2005 to 2013. I am proud to once again stand with social workers on the front lines of change each and every day. Starting this summer, we welcomed several new staff members, strengthening our ability to advance social work professional practice and effectively advocate for vulnerable clients and communities served by social workers.

We have had several exciting accomplishments this year, which you can read more about on the reverse side of this report. This year we have faced serious challenges as a society: mass shootings, blatant discrimination, and threats to health care and the fabric of our safety net have made us all feel a call to action. In the year ahead, we will channel these frustrations to advance the mission of social work: to enhance well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

In 2018, we look forward to unveiling our new monthly magazine, Social Work Voice, replacing FOCUS after 44 years of production. We will also start utilizing our 2018-2020 strategic plan, with an emphasis on infusing racial justice into all that we do and in all the areas where we advocate both internally and externally.

For those of you I have not yet met, I look forward to connecting at Symposium 2018 and at the Legislative Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD), both in April 2018, where we will be focused on reenergizing our base to advance our shared goals and priorities for a more just and equitable society for all.

In solidarity,

Rebekah Gewirtz, MPA
Executive Director

The National Association of Social Workers - Massachusetts Chapter (NASW-MA) is committed to advancing professional social work practice and the profession and to promoting human rights, social and economic justice, and unimpeded access to services for everyone.
In October, NASW-MA joined Governor Charlie Baker, Secretary Marylou Sudders, and the Deans and Directors of the Massachusetts schools of social work to unveil the Social Work Education Core Principles for the Prevention and Management of Substance Misuse in order to prepare the next generation of social workers with the tools necessary to curb the current opioid epidemic.

Throughout the fall and into 2018, NASW-MA advocated to end retroactive claims denials (clawbacks) from Beacon Health Options and successfully negotiated the opportunity for Massachusetts clinicians to resubmit claims. The work continues in 2018.

In April, the annual Legislative Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) had a record-breaking 710 attendees, representing most of the schools of social work in Massachusetts.

In November, we supported the successful initiative to get the clawback bill included as an amendment in the Senate Health Care Bill. If passed in the House, this bill would limit the window for retroactive claims denials.

In November, we surpassed our Raise Up MA goal, collecting a total of 1,500 signatures, to get $15 Minimum Wage and Paid Leave questions on the 2018 ballot.

As a lead member of the Lift the Cap coalition, NASW-MA helped organize Diaper Day in May and the Caps and Mittens Event in October, both at the State House. The goal of the coalition and the events is to repeal the Cap on Kids which denies cash assistance to 9,000 very poor children and families in Massachusetts.

In June, NASW-MA’s Nursing Home Committee hosted “Ethics Across the Continuum of Care” with keynote speaker Dr. Fredric Reamer. The conference energized nursing home social workers across the state.

In October, NASW-MA hosted its annual school social work conference. The conference focused on social/ emotional learning and featured Anne Galligan, the Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Attendees were among the first to be trained on this new DESE initiative.